

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact:

*Anne Johnson, Director of Communications, (202) 523-3240, ext. 27*

WASHINGTON - The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) commends the House of Representatives for passing, and in particular Congresswomen Loretta Sanchez for introducing, House Resolution 427 expressing support for the courageous leadership of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam and the urgent need for religious freedom and related human rights in Vietnam.

“The Commission believes that the passage of House Resolution 427 will send an important message to the Vietnamese government, that better relations between our two countries will only be achieved when there are notable improvements in human rights,” said USCIRF Vice Chair Nina Shea.

The Vietnamese government has shown, again and again, that it is determined to suppress religious freedom and maintain strict control over speech, including the media and Internet. There is incontrovertible evidence that the Vietnamese government has initiated crackdowns on religious leaders and believers, free speech advocates, political reformers, and those championing the rights of ethnic minorities.

Said Shea, “Advancing free speech, free press, and freedom of religion represents not only core American values but also international standards of human rights-standards that the Vietnamese have already acceded to in various international treaties and covenants. Working to protect and promote these basic freedoms furthers the interests of both the United States and the people of Vietnam.”

**The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom** was created by the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 to monitor the status of freedom of thought, conscience, and religion or belief abroad, as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and related international instruments, and to give independent policy recommendations to the President, the Secretary of State and the Congress.

- Fellow Michael K. Young

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